

BIG 52 PAGES OF EXCITING ADVENTURES IN FULL COLOR

WESTERN HERO

A Fawcett Publication

NOV. NO. 96



TEX RITTER



TOM MIX



MONTE HALE



GABBY HAYES



10¢

In this issue:
TEX RITTER
IN
RANGE ROBBER!

FAWCETT COMICS WHEEL OF FORTUNE~

EVERY ONE A WINNER!

Gabby Hayes

Western

WESTERN HERO

ROCKY LANE

WESTERN

LASH LARUE

WESTERN

TOM MIX

WESTERN

**Captain
Marvel**

**HOPALONG
CASSIDY**

**Monte
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Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.

W. H. Fawcett, Jr., President



EVER SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN, MOTHER NATURE HAS BEEN PROVIDING FOR ITS INHABITANTS, BUT SOMETIMES SHE TIRES AND SCIENCE HAS TO STEP IN AND GIVE HER A HELPING HAND! THE GREEDY WAIT FOR JUST SUCH A TIME, SO THAT THEY MAY PROFIT! BUT TEX RITTER, THE PRAIRIE RANGER, IS AROUND TO HELP NATURE AND SCIENCE AND ALSO TO METE OUT JUSTICE TO THE UNLAWFUL!

ONE DAY, THE PRAIRIE RANGER PAUSES FOR A MOMENT AND SEES ---

THERE SHE IS, WHITE FLASH! THE TRAIN FROM DAWSON CITY!



SAY, WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN ON THAT IRON HORSE?



WESTERN HERO

TEX'S EAGLE VISION HAS DETECTED A STRANGE SCENE ABOARD THE TRAIN.



COME ON, WHITE FLASH! WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE, PRONTO! THAT OLD, SILVER HAIRIED GENT'S TAKING A BAD BEATING FROM THAT BIG HOMBRE!



THAT'S IT, WHITE FLASH! LET'S MAKE DUST! WE'LL TAKE THE SHORT CUT DOWN!



UP, NOW! GOOD BOY! THIS'LL BRING US RIGHT OUT ALONG THE TRACKS!



MOMENTS LATER---

HERE WE ARE! NOW LET'S CATCH THAT TRAIN, WHITE FLASH!

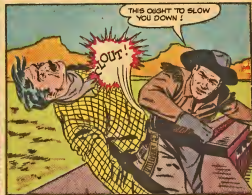
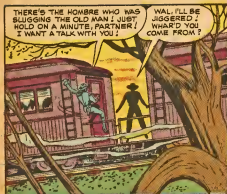


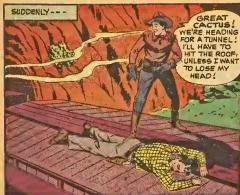
THAT'S IT, WHITE FLASH! NOW JUST SWING IN A LITTLE CLOSER SO I CAN GRAB HOLD OF THIS LADDER AND---



-- SWING MYSELF ABOARD, LIKE THIS!







WELL, I'VE SEARCHED THE TRAIN AND HE'S NOWHERE! I RECKON I'LL SWING ONTO WHITE FLASH AND RIDE ALONG TO THE NEXT STATION! MAYBE SOMEONE WILL BE WAITING THERE TO MEET THE OLD FELLOW AND CAN EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON!



LATER, AS THE TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION OF A SMALL TOWN, TEX SEES---

ALL ABOARD!

NOBODY APPEARS TO BE GETTING OFF HERE AND THAT GALS BEEN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE! I'LL JUST ASK HER IF IT'S THE OLD GENT!



PARDON, MISS TEX RITTER'S MY NAME AND I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AN OLD GENTLEMAN WITH A FINE CROP OF SILVER HAIR?

WHY, YES--YES, I AM! THAT'S MY UNCLE THOMAS! HAVE YOU SEEN HIM? HE WIRED ME HE'D BE ON THIS TRAIN!



I SAW A ROUGH YARMINT BEATING HIM BETWEEN THE CARS OF THE TRAIN, BUT BY THE TIME I REACHED THERE HE SEEMED TO HAVE VANISHED! THANKS TO A TUNNEL, THAT YARMINT GOT AWAY, TOO!

A MAN BEATING UNCLE THOMAS?

WHY? HE WAS KIND AND GOOD, AND HE WAS COMING HERE TO HELP ME--AND ALL THE RANCHERS IN THE VALLEY!



I WAS HOPING MAYBE YOU'D BE ABLE TO CLEAR THIS UP FOR ME! LOOKS AS IF I WAS WRONG!

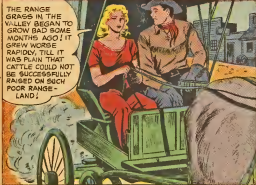
PERHAPS YOU'D BEST

RIDE BACK TO MY RANCH WITH ME! I'M MARY ELLEN ROGERS AND I RUN A RANCH IN THE VALLEY! UNCLE THOMAS IS A BOTANIST AND I APPEALED TO HIM FOR HELP!



AS THEY HEAD FOR THE RANCH, MARY ELLEN TELLS HER STORY!

THE RANGE GRASS IN THE VALLEY BEGAN TO GROW BAD SOME MONTHS AGO! IT GREW WORSE RAPIDLY, TILL IT WAS PLAIN THAT CATTLE COULD NOT BE SUCCESSFULLY RAISED ON SUCH POOR RANGE-LAND!



ALL THE RANCHERS OF THE VALLEY MET AND WE TRIED TO DO WHAT WE COULD, RE-SEEDING, DRAINAGE, LOTS OF THINGS! BUT NOTHING WORKED! SOMETHING IN THE SOIL SEEMS TO BE RUINING THE GRASS!





MOON--
JUST
FEEL
THIS
GRASS,
TEX!
IT'S
DRY
AND
HARD!

CATTLE WOULDN'T LIVE
FOR LONG ON THIS KIND
OF STUFF, THAT'S SURE!
SO YOU SENT FOR YOUR
UNCLE, FIGURING AS A
BOTANIST HE MIGHT
HELP YOU!

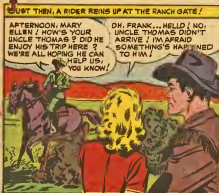


EXACTLY! UNCLE THOMAS
WROTE AND TOLD ME HE HAD A
CHEMICAL PREPARATION FOR THE
SOIL WHICH HE WAS SURE WOULD
WORK! HE WAS COMING HERE TO
TRY IT ON MY RANGE! IF SUCCESS-
FUL, ALL THE RANCHERS WERE TO
USE IT!



AND NOW
SOMETHING
AWFUL'S
HAPPENED TO
UNCLE THOMAS!
I-I JUST KNOW
IT! OH, WHY
WOULD ANY-
ONE WANT TO
HURT HIM?

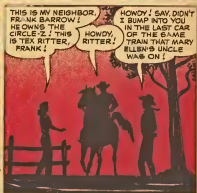
THERE ARE ALL
KINDS OF VAR-
MINTS IN THIS
WORLD, MARY
ELLEN! AND
BESIDES, HE
MAY BE ALL
RIGHT!



JUST THEN, A RIDER REINS UP AT THE RANCH GATE!

AFTERNOON, MARY
ELLEN! HOW'S YOUR
UNCLE THOMAS? DID HE
ENJOY HIS TRIP HERE?
WE'RE ALL HOPING HE CAN
HELP US,
YOU KNOW!

OH, FRANK... HELLO! NO,
UNCLE THOMAS DIDN'T
ARRIVE! I'M AFRAID
SOMETHING'S HAPPENED
TO HIM!



THIS IS MY NEIGHBOR,
FRANK BARROW!
HE OWNS THE
CIRCLE-Z! THIS
IS TEX RITTER,
FRANK!

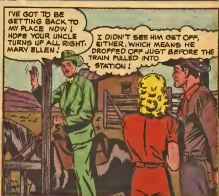
HOWDY, RITTER!

HOWDY! SAY, DIDN'T
I BUMP INTO YOU
IN THE LAST CAR
OF THE SAME
TRAIN THAT MARY
ELLEN'S UNCLE
WAS ON!



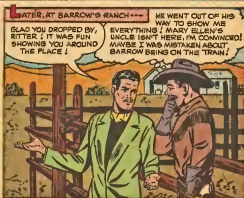
SORRY, RITTER, BUT YOU MUST BE
MISTAKEN! I'VE BEEN ON MY
RANCH FOR DAYS! I'VE AN
ORDINARY FACE! FOLKS ARE
ALWAYS TAKING ME FOR SOME-
ONE
ELSE!

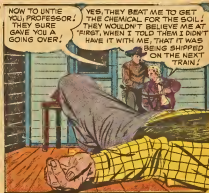
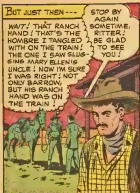
HE'S LYING!
HE WAS ON
THAT TRAIN
AND I
BUMPED IN-
TO HIM!

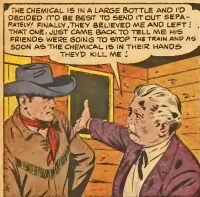


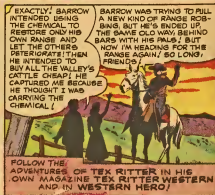
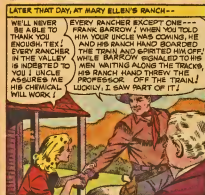
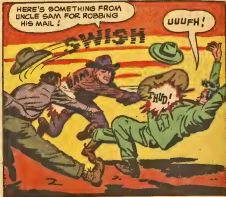
I'VE GOT TO BE
GETTING BACK TO
MY PLACE NOW!
HOPE YOUR UNCLE
TURNS UP ALL RIGHT,
MARY ELLEN!

I DIDN'T SEE HIM GET OFF,
EITHER, WHICH MEANS HE
DROPPED OFF JUST BEFORE THE
TRAIN PULLED INTO
STATION!









DECOY TRAIL

A "Slim Carson" Story

By Dick Kraus



THREE days and nights in the saddle had made young Slim Carson a mighty tired rider. As the big bay racked along over the monotonous prairie land, Slim felt his head falling forward—caught himself on the verge of falling asleep. Each time it happened, he shook his head violently to clear it, and forced his aching lids open!

"Got to stay awake," he muttered to the bay horse. "Those Barry gunnels are holed up somewhere along this border—and I've got to locate them . . . afore they ventilate any more bank tellers!"

Steel-sinewed hands gripping the worn leather reins, Slim rode on. It was three days now since a gang of Kansas gunmen, headed by "Porcupine Chet" Barry—so-called for his shock of bristly brown hair—had galloped into the Texas town of Blue Eagle. Six-guns roaring, they had routed the bank guards, killed two tellers, and made off with a pack-horse load of mazuma. Slim Carson, youthful border patrolman, had been on their trail almost from the moment they vamoosed out of Blue Eagle. But so far, he had not caught up to them—and now he was getting wearier by the moment.

"OH, CARSON!" A drawling voice suddenly cut into Slim's thoughts. He whirled, to see a husky, denim-clad rancher on the side of the trail.

"Tom Norton! What are you doing in these parts?" Slim asked.

"I'm looking for my boys," the big rancher answered worriedly. "Young Roy and Rod! They complained I was giving them too many chores to do around the ranch—and they ran off! Crazy youngsters!" He shook his head ruefully. "I've got to find them, before they get into a peck of trouble. Slim, would you—do you think you could undertake to look for them?"

"I'd like to, Norton," Slim replied. "But I'm on the trail of 'Porcupine Chet' Barry and his rannies—and until I get my sights on them . . . I can't think about anything else! Good luck, and I hope you find them!"

Kneeing the bay on, Slim cut off the trail in the direction of the Rio Grande. An idea had come to him. There were many old caves along the border river, and it was possible that the Barry outlaws might have holed up in one of them! In any case, it was worth looking into. Suddenly, Slim froze, as he drew near the river. There, in the soft clay by the water's edge, were footprints! For a moment, the thought crossed Slim's mind—"Mebbe these tracks were made by Tom Norton's runaway kids!" But swiftly, he rejected that idea.

"These are tracks made by big boots . . . by grown-up men. And who would be skulking along this bank but . . . but Chet Barry and his rannies!"

Quickly, he dismounted and picketed the bay. Then, on foot, taking advantage of the cover afforded by the high weeds that grew along the river's edge, he followed the tracks. They led him along a wandering trail, in and out, sometimes close to the water's edge, sometimes out of sight of the Rio! Then Slim Carson froze. For, a hundred yards ahead of him, he could see the reeds moving as if someone were hiding behind them and crawling. And he could hear—faintly—voices!

Tensely, gripping his Colts, Slim crawled along through the weeds. Scarcely daring to breathe, he snaked, foot by foot and yard by yard, toward the spot where he was certain the outlaws were lurking. When he was within ten yards, he sprang up, his voice cutting through the air!

"All right, Barry! Get 'em high—you and the rest of your galoots! You're covered!"

For a moment there was silence.

Then, rising out of the reeds, Slim saw two tow heads, two freckled noses and two pairs of big, unblinking, frightened eyes! With disbelief, Slim realized that he had been following the Norton boys, Roy and Rod, all along!

"Don't shoot!" the older of the two stammered. "W-we didn't mean any harm, Slim! We j-just wanted to take a day off f-from work!"

"Well, you ornery little jackrabbits!" Slim exploded.

But that was as far as he got. For, before he could draw another breath, a shot rang out in the clear prairie air! One shot—and then another! Slim Carson's Stetson was knocked through the air as if it had been hit by a fist, and he felt the searing wind of a bullet slashing past his cheek!

Dropping panther-like to the ground, Slim caught the Norton boys under his long arms and flung them to the ground.

"Lie there," he whispered. "Lie there or I'll paddle you so hard you'll feel like a river steamboat! I've got a little job to do . . . and I want to find you here when I get back! Hear me?"

Both boys nodded in wordless assent. Then, jaw set and eyes slitted, Slim Carson moved slowly away from Roy and Rod Norton. As he had thrown himself toward the ground, he had seen the puff of smoke that told him where the shots had come from. It was from a dark little cavern along the water's edge. And it could only have come from the guns of "Porcupine Chet" and his hardrocks! Evidently, when Slim had rushed the kids—they had thought they were discovered . . . and they had fired, giving away their hiding place.

Gripping his Colts hard, Slim crawled in a winding path—roughly a long curve. He knew that the reeds that gave him shelter also gave away his movement. But he also had noticed that slight gusts of wind had begun to ruffle the tasseled tops of the weeds—and he timed his movements so that they were partly concealed by the wind gusts. Gradually he approached the cave mouth—

stalking a waiting prey for the second time that day.

As he inched forward, beads of sweat glistened on his tanned forehead. But the Colts felt reassuring in his hand. For these were the guns that his father had worn . . . the guns that his father had given him, to fight crime along the border. That was the job he was doing now!

Suddenly, a shot rang out, as one of the outlaws caught a glimpse of the crawling lawman. Time for caution was over, and Slim abandoned his cover.

Half-crouched, half-standing, Slim Carson ran toward the cave—and, as he ran, his six-guns roared a message of angry justice! Terrified, the outlaws sent a scattered volley toward him. But their shots whined by futilely, and in a moment, he was at the mouth of the cave, pumping hot lead into it!

The fight was savage— and it was over almost as soon as it had begun! Clutching their wounds, the bristly-haired Chet Barry and his lawless cohorts stumbled out of the cave . . . in abject surrender!

"Don't shoot," Barry grunted. "Yuh got us, Mister. Though how yuh trailed us here, I'll never know! I thought we covered our tracks better than a lobo wolf in springtime!"

Later, when he had turned the outlaws over to the sheriff of Blue Eagle, Slim Carson asked Roy and Rod Norton a question that had been bothering him all along.

"How about that trail you left?" he asked, puzzled. "I was certain that it was a trail made by big boots—belonging to grown-up men—or I wouldn't have followed it."

"It was," admitted Roy Norton sheepishly. "We figgered we might be followed, so we borrowed a couple of pairs of Dad's old boots and wore them! Gave us blisters, too!"

SLIM threw an arm around each of the boys and began to laugh. "You fooled me, all right," he laughed. "You fooled me right into following the pair of you right to where Chet Barry and his galoots were hiding out! But never try it again, boys! Never try it again!"

THE END



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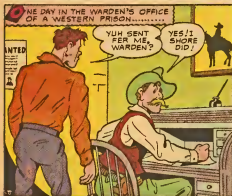
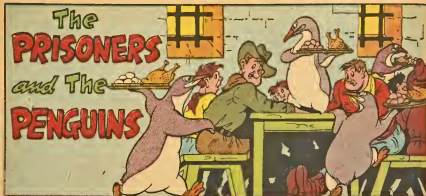
I wish to reserve the mask C.O.D. ☐

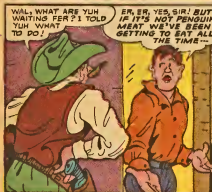
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY OR TOWN _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____







GABBY HAYES

and *The*
Money Fraud

LET'S GO, BOYS!
AND KEEP THOSE
GUNS BLAZING!

THE STAGECOACH FROM THE EAST, HEADING FOR RAINHIDE, PASSES THROUGH LONESOME FOOTHILL COUNTRY--COUNTRY WHERE OUTLAWS LURK!

INSIDE THE LUMBERING,
LURCHING COACH...

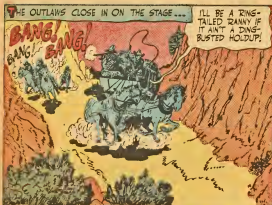
YES, SIR, STRANGER! I'M
GABBY HAYES, THE FOREMOST
CITIZEN OF RAINHIDE!

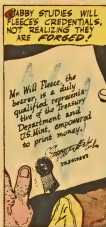
MY NAME IS
WILL FLEECE!

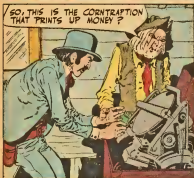
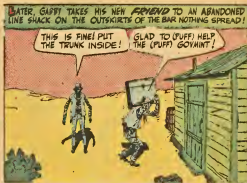
PLEASED TO
MEET YOU!

LISTEN!
A SHOT!

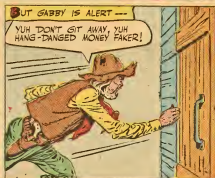
BANG!

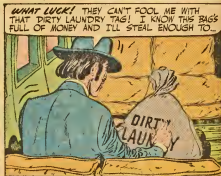




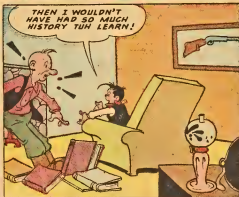








FOLLOW THE ADVENTURES OF GABBY HAYES IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE, **GABBY HAYES WESTERN**, AND IN **WESTERN HERO** AND **MONTE HALE WESTERN** EVERY MONTH.



MONTE HALE

in

PARDNER'S HATE!

JUMPING SAGEBRUSH!
MONTE HALE'S HOSS
IS TRYING TO
KILL HIM!

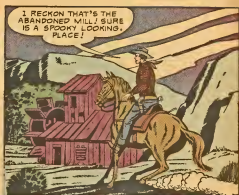
Inseparable? That is the word for MONTE HALE and his famous horse, PARDNER! But the day came when Pardner turned against Monte, when, with flashing hoofs, he tried to bring death to the man who loved him best!

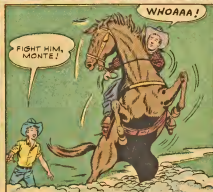
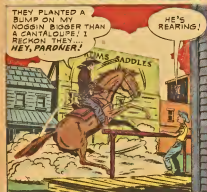
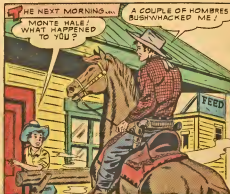
MONTE HALE, THE WANDERING COWBOY,
RECEIVES A MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE!

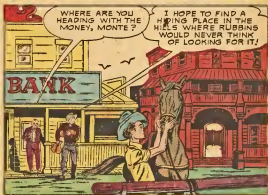
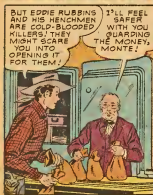
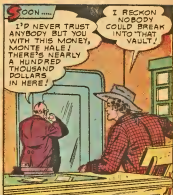
I'm in great trouble! Only you can help me, Mr. Hale! Please meet me tonight at the abandoned mill outside of town!

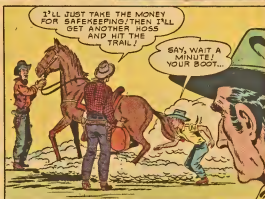
THERE'S NO SIGNATURE, PARDNER! AND I CAN'T EVEN TELL WHETHER THE NOTE WAS WRITTEN BY A MAN OR A WOMAN!

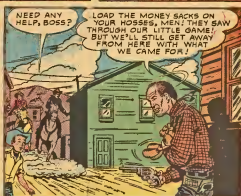
WESTERN HERO

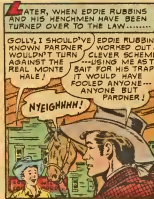
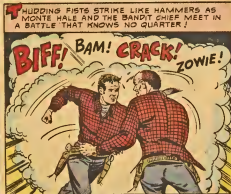




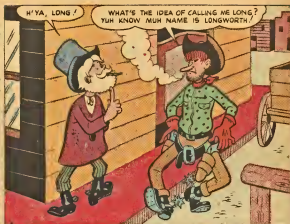


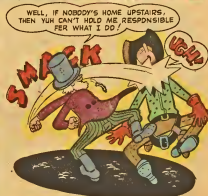
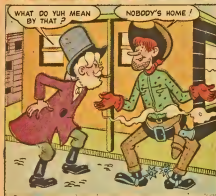






THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT!





Scare your friends
with these mysterious

MAKE-UP TRICKS



Mountaineer's
Beard



Chinese
Mandarin
Disguise



Van Dyke
Beard



Guy 90's
Mustache



Comic
Disguise

Cut disguises like these shown above out of black paper, making them the right size to fit your face.



FREE

Send for your copy of "Tricks with Tape", new booklet full of new playtime ideas. Write Dept. FC-90, Minnesota Mining & Mfg. Co., St. Paul 6, Minn., enclosing the plain tab from a roll of "Scotch" Cellophane Tape.

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Cellophane Tape

Transparent as glass • Seals without moistening



10¢ 15¢
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The
KEY
of
HONOR

I HAVE TO MAKE A DANGEROUS TRIP, FRANK! THE WAY IS FILLED WITH PERILS! I MAY NEVER RETURN ALIVE!

SHORE YUH WILL, BOSS!

I HOPE SO, BUT WE HAVE TO FACE THE FACTS! THAT'S A GOOD CHANCE I'LL BE KILLED! HUH? WHAT PER? HYAR TAKE THIS KEY!

TO OPEN MUH SAFE IN CASE I DON'T RETURN IN A MONTH! ALL MUH LIFE SAVINGS ARE IN THAR! IF I DON'T COME BACK, IT'S ALL GONE! YORES!

I KNOW I CAN TRUST YUH NOT TO OPEN THE SAFE AND TAKE MUH MONEY BEFORE A MONTH HAS PASSED AND IT'S SHORE I'M NOT COMING BACK!

YUH CAN TRUST ME!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER---

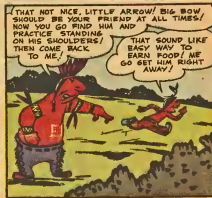
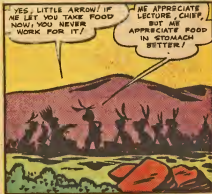
WAIT, BOSS!

HUH? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

SOMETHING'S THE MATTER WITH THIS KEY-- IT DOESN'T OPEN THE SAFE!

!!!

BIG BOW AND LITTLE ARROW in The GRAND FEAST



MEANWHILE--

SIT DOWN, BIG BOW AND ENJOY FOOD WITH ME!

IT NICE OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO DINNER!



BUT AT THAT MOMENT--

HOLD ON, BIG BOW! DID YOU WORK FOR THAT FOOD?

NO! HE MY FRIEND! WE INVITE ME TO EAT WITH HIM!



NO TOUCH FOOD THEN! IF NO WORK FOR FOOD! BECOME HOBBO!

BUT HE NOT TRYING TO CHISEL MEAL! HE INVITE HIM AS FRIEND!



QUIET! ME DOING THIS FOR BIG BOW!



IF BIG BOW WANT TO EAT ME SHOW HIM EASY WAY TO EARN MONEY FOR FOOD!

EVERY TIME YOU SHOW ME SOMETHING, ME GET IN TROUBLE!



NOT THIS TIME! CHIEF HIMSELF, GIVE US JOB!

ME NO TAKE JOB IF NOT DECENT KIND OF WORK! NO WANT HUMILIATING JOB. AGAIN LIKE YOU ALWAYS GET ME!



THIS NICE JOB! ALL GOT TO DO IS HOLD ME ON YOUR SHOULDERS!

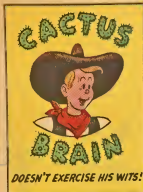
HOLD YOU ON SHOULDERS! WHAT FOR?





IT WAS BETTER PRACTICE THIS WAY! NOW QUIET! THERE'S CHIEF!





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HALE
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TOM MIX

and THE SWINDLER'S REVENGE



ALL RIGHT, TOM! IN THE MEANTIME, IF YUH HEAR OF ANYONE WHO'S WILLING TO PAY A GOOD PRICE FER MY CLAIM, LET ME KNOW! I'M NOT ONE FER MINING THE GOLD, I JUST ENJOY PROSPECTING FER IT!

I'LL KEEP IT IN MIND, BLINKER! NOW I'D BETTER BE STARTING BACK FOR THE T.H. BAR RANCH!



SAY, BASEHART, DID YUH RECOGNIZE THAT CRITTER WHO CALLS HIMSELF BLINKER?

I SURE DID, TODE--EVEN WITHOUT THE BEARD! IT LOOKS AS IF YUH AND I ARE GOING TO END UP IN THE MINING BUSINESS! AS SOON AS WE FIND OUT WHERE THE MINE IS, WE'RE GOING TO PAY BLINKER A VISIT!



Later, at the old Dobie Gold Mine ---

--- GIVING YUH THIS GOLD MINE FER ONLY FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, JENKINS, IS LIKE GIVING IT AWAY, BUT SINCE I'D RATHER SEARCH FER NEW GOLD, I'LL SELL IT TO YUH AT THAT PRICE!

JUST SIGN THAT CONTRACT AND THE DEAL WILL BE CLOSED!



DON'T SIGN THAT CONTRACT, BLINKER! WE HAVE A BETTER BUSINESS PROPOSITION TO MAKE YUH!

YUH WAIT OUTSIDE, MISTER, UNTIL WE'RE THROUGH TALKING!



WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

WE AIM TO TAKE OVER THE MINE FER NOTHING!



FER NOTHING?

CORRECT! YUH SEE, BLINKER, WE RECOGNIZE YUH EVEN WITHOUT MORE BEARD! IF YUH WON'T SIGN THE MINE OVER TO US, THEN I'M AFRAID WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TELL THE SHERIFF THAT YOU'RE REALLY MATT DURSTON -- WHO'S WANTED FER MURDER!



THIS IS A SWINDLE, BUT I DON'T RECKON I HAVE ANY CHOICE! BUT THE LEAST YUH COULD DO IS GIVE ME SOME MONEY TO GET OUT OF TOWN!

THERE'S TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS IN YUH! I RECKON THAT'S NOT TOO MUCH TO PAY FER A GOLD MINE, IS IT, BASEHART?





INSTEAD OF US PUTTING SOMETHING OVER ON BUNKER, HE PUT SOMETHING OVER ON US! I BETTER GO BACK AND TELL TODE WE'VE BEEN SWINDLED!

SLAM!

GOLD MISBORN

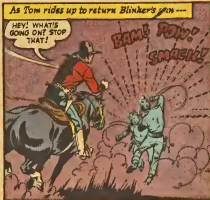
When Basehart returns to the mine ---

I WAS JUST GOING TO RIDE OUT AFTER YUH, BASEHART! I THOUGHT YUH RAN OUT ON ME WITH ALL THAT GOLD!

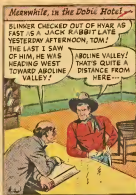
YUH KNOW I WOULDN'T DO A THING LIKE THAT, TODE! BUT I'VE GOT BAD NEWS---

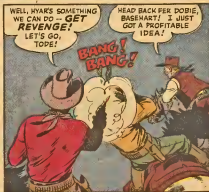
-- I'VE JUST COME FROM THE ASSAY OFFICE! BLINKER SWINDLED US! THERE'S NO GOLD IN THOSE SACKS! IT'S JUST POOL'S GOLD!

SO THAT'S YORE GAME, BASEHART! YUH SWITCHED POOL'S GOLD FER THE REAL GOLD AND NOW YUH EXPECT ME TO FALL FER YORE STORY!









At the Abolition Valley jailhouse--

EXCUSE ME, SHERIFF! MY NAME'S TOM MIX AND ON MY WAY HERE FROM DOBIE, I FOUND THE HOMBRE I WAS LOOKING FOR SHOT TO DEATH IN THE HILLS!

I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YUH, MIX-- AS SOON AS I OPEN THIS PACKAGE I JUST RECEIVED FROM THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE!



NOW WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE POOR CRITTER WHO WAS SHOT?

HE CALLED HIMSELF BLINKER, BUT I'D SWEAR THAT WITH A BEARD ON, HE'D BE A DEAD RINGER FOR THE MAN ON THAT HANDBILL, MATT DURSTON!



AS A MATTER OF FACT, A LOT OF THINGS ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE SENSE NOW! FOR INSTANCE, WHY BLUNKER WOULD HAVE HAD TO TURN THE MINE OVER TO TOOE AND BASEHART! THEY COULD HAVE BLACKMAILED HIM INTO IT!



I'LL RIDE UP IN THE HILLS AND HAVE A LOOK AT THE BODY! BUT IF IT IS MATT DURSTON, WHY DIDN'T WHOEVER KILLED HIM CLAIM THE REWARD?

THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN SOMETHING BIGGER! SHERIFF



WHAT DO YUH MEAN?

I'M NOT SURE MYSELF, SHERIFF! WHILE YOU'RE EXAMINING THE BODY, I'M GOING TO TRY TO FIND THE ANSWER!



I NEVER DID THINK THERE WAS ANY REAL GOLD IN THAT MINE! IF BLUNKER WAS AMING TO SWINDLE SOMEONE BY SELLING THEM THE WORTHLESS MINE AND IF, BY ACCIDENT, TOOE AND BASEHART WERE SWINDLED, THEY MIGHT HAVE KILLED BLUNKER FOR REVENGE! BUT IT WOULD ALSO LEAVE THEM IN A POSITION TO SWINDLE SOMEONE ELSE!





I'VE GOT TO FIND THOSE TWO CRITTERS! BUT WHAT THEY'RE UP TO WILL TELL ME IF WHAT I'M THINKING IS FACT OR JUST THEORY!



Meanwhile, at the mine ---

HYAK'S YORE MONEY! ALL I CAN SAY IS, IT SURE WAS DECENT OF YUH FELLOWS TO OFFER TO SELL THE MINE TO ME!

I'LL SIGN THE CONTRACT AND EVERYTHING WILL BE LEGAL!

WELL, AFTER ALL, YUH DID PUT YORE BID IN FIRST AND WE NEVER WOULD HAVE FORGIVEN OURSELVES IF WE CHEATED YUH OUT OF IT!



LEGAL IS THE LAST WORD I'D EXPECT YOU TWO SAGE RATS TO USE! I FIGURED YOU'D TRY TO SWINDLE SOME INNOCENT MAN BY SELLING HIM THIS WORTHLESS MINE, JUST AS BLUNKER INTENDED TO DO!

IT'S MIX! AND HE SEEMS TO KNOW EVERYTHING! WE'D BETTER V-MOOSE!



WHERE ARE YOU RUNNING? IF YOU KNEW THIS MINE, YOU'D KNOW THIS IS THE ONLY EXIT!



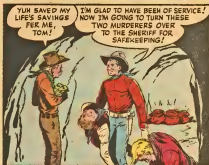
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO GO RIGHT THROUGH YOU, MIX! I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T SHOOT AT UNARMED MEN!



THAT'S RIGHT -- I WOULDN'T SHOOT THEM, BUT I DON'T HESITATE TO USE MY FISTS ON THEM!

POW!

BAM!



YUH SAVED MY LIFE'S SAVINGS FER ME, TOM!

I'M GLAD TO HAVE BEEN OF SERVICE! NOW I'M GOING TO TURN THESE TWO MURDERERS OVER TO THE SHERIFF FOR SAFEKEEPING!



TOM MIX IS ON THE AIR!

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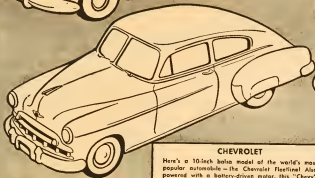
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